

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 12, 2015

Meeting No.: 216

Project: 500 Park Avenue

Phase: Final

Location: Park Avenue and West Franklin Street, Baltimore, MD

PRESENTATION:

Charles Alexander, Principal, of the Alexander Design Studio presented the schematic design for the residential apartments at 500 Park Avenue. Mr. Alexander reviewed the site, presently a parking lot, and immediately adjacent to and prospectively connected to a project by the same developer, The Time Group, at 520 Park Avenue. Mr. Alexander focused on site context and the urban fabric conditions. The site has 1' of topographic change across the site. Taking advantage of the slope, the design team inserted a garage under the proposed building off of Franklin. In addition to the residential component of the building above, a secondary structure has been incorporated as a retail component off of Park with an amenity above and a bridge element intended to connect 500 Park with 520 Park.

Scott Huot of Red Sketch, landscape architect for the project, presented the site character, including the street conditions, the courtyard entry, and the stormwater strategy. Large shade trees line Franklin set in 35'-long beds. Seven-foot wide sidewalks are set with precast concrete pavers, with larger scale pavers identifying the corner condition. Fifty-three foot long tree pits line Park. Ginkgos line Tyson Alley. A fenced dog-run area of artificial turf abuts the building along the alley. A dumpster screen is positioned at the intersection of Tyson and Franklin to screen the refuse container.

The area of the garage that is not supporting the apartment towers is comprised of a sedum roof. Though not accessible, the roof is patterned with paving stones for service and bands of planting. The courtyard is designed for stormwater management purposes and is not accessible.

Mr. Alexander identified those architectural elements of the proposal that were modified based on comments from the Panel at the May 14th session. The façade of the building has been simplified substantially from the previous effort. And the nature of construction, as well. Inspiration for the modified facades comes from the renovated 520 Park structure. Mr. Alexander reviewed the proposed elevations of each façade, as well as the material selections. The illumination of the building is through recessed lighting in the soffits or strip lighting, as along the brow of the first floor elevation.

Above the retail element is a shared amenity space for both properties. It is largely comprised of a pool with tall tile walls facing along each short end. A glass and metal bridge connects 500 Park with 520 Park in this location.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

Mr. Alexander was congratulated for the overall progress of the composition, for simplifying the design, and for responding to the Panels comments from the May 2015 session. The façade has become more interesting in its current description, although a little more penetration of the façade would be welcome. The Panels general comments are identified below:

- The entrance to the apartments is much better with the blade sign that previously adorned it.
- The frame above the lobby space (and expressed on the Park Street façade) is a little too heavy and should be lightened, if at all possible.
- Consider allowing pool goes to look up Park. Presently, there is an architectural construction that does not allow this long view.
- The rhythm of trees along Park Street could respond less to the façade and more to the regular character of the street.
- The proposed illumination of the building is good.
- As noted above, a little more glass in the façade would be a welcome addition, particularly to those inhabiting the building. The present iteration is a little too “solid.”
- The ribbon marque should not return down the alleys, as presently described. Perhaps it stops at Hamilton and at Tyson.
- Some concern was expressed about the functionality of the dripline of recessed windows. Without a proper “lip,” any water shed from the sill will likely stain the façade.
- The plant selection for the stormwater courtyard will need to be resilient, as the standard condition will likely be dry shade with periods of inundation.

PANEL ACTION: Recommend Final Approval with Comments

Attending:

Klaus Philipsen – ArchPlan Inc.

Adam Bednar – The Daily Record

Justin Williams – RMG

Caroline Peri – DPoB

Brian Greenan – BDC

Scott Huot – Red Sketch

Mark Capan – The Time Group

Rick Seltzer – Baltimore Biz Journal

UDARP Panel Members – Messrs. Bowden, Haresign, Rubin*, and Burns

Planning Department- Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo